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'Use Your Hands for Happiness':

Home Craft and Make-do-and-Mend in British Women's Magazines in the 1920s and 1930s

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'*What is needed is an outflow of nervous energy into other paths, and it probably is a self-protective instinct that makes a woman pick up her sewing or knitting while sitting still.*' (Modern Woman *02.1935:10*).

With their kits, transfers, patterns, coupons, colourfully visualized transformation tips and step-by-step instructions, home craft features were a prominent and popular component of women's consumer magazines in the 1920s and 1930s. More recently, this form of consumer craft has been accused of limiting and even suppressing women's creativity. In contrast, this article will argue that home craft, as a component of a new commercial culture of home-making in the period, offered women opportunities for self-expression, agency and self-determination. It was a significant means of materializing distinctive skills, values and an aesthetic that was central to a feminine culture of modernity promoted through popular magazines and other media. Furthermore, some Home Editors, such as Edith Blair at Woman, *were committed to improving women's taste in line with contemporary design discourse. Yet, it was the business of editors, unlike design reformers, to be well attuned to their readers' needs and aspirations. As such, home craft features may be read as a means of addressing the problems and anxieties surrounding the acceleration of modern life (unemployment, the strain of new work processes and their effects on physical and mental life) as well as imaging the cluster of aspirational dreams and desires symbolized by the ideal home, modern or otherwise.*

Keywords: consumption—domesticity—gender—home craft—magazines—modernism

'There is [*sic*] surely few more valuable services to be rendered to the national character than an insistence on good craftsmanship, and especially on good-craftsmanship in home-making'.[1]

Most often associated with post-war reconstruction and the burgeoning consumerism of the later 1950s, DIY in the form of home craft, make-do-and-mend and interior decoration also featured in the host of home-based consumer, or women's 'service' magazines that appeared in the 1920s and 1930s.[2] The role of commercial magazines in disseminating and mediating modern, and even modernist, design and preoccupations has gone largely unremarked, as has the connection between handicrafts, home craft and DIY. Locating home craft within an intersecting network of discourses, including rational housekeeping, the handicrafts revival, the modern feminine aesthetic in interior design, fashion and emerging ideas about Englishness during the period, this article will explore how it enabled and underscored women's skills, taste and decision-making power within the home. The resulting image of an active, autonomous modern female home-maker is, significantly, very different to the stereotypically passive, decorative women featured in DIY ads in later decades.[3]

Contributing to debates on the disjunctive experience of modernity, Alison Light, in her important work on middle-class women's writing between the Wars, identified a 'contradictory and determining tension' at the centre of English life that she termed 'conservative modernity'.[4] Light's argument for an Englishness that was 'less imperial and more inward looking, more domestic, more private', acknowledges a conservative approach to modernity that has influenced subsequent work on the decorative arts, design and commerce in the inter-war years. In his essay 'The English Compromise', Paul Greenhalgh convincingly related the tendency to combine 'progressive form with regressive content' in design to the demise of empire, a new interest in history and the continuing importance of Arts & Crafts values.[5] Whilst Greenhalgh foregrounds an emerging mythology of English national life, including a vision of England built around 'the old English cottage', a popular topic in magazines, his is a discussion in which gender is conspicuously absent. Feminist academics working on commercial culture and consumption, in contrast, have explored the implications of a feminized culture of domestic modernity suggested by Light's study, with attention to specificities of class and gender.[6] This article contributes to that debate.

Part of the new commercial culture of homemaking promoted through exhibitions, retail and advertising, the 'service' magazine, emerged in the 1920s. A highly managed commercial product, it featured 'own brand' items, increasing pages of advertisements, and editorial 'experts,' dispensing consumer advice.[7] Some, such as the monthly *Modern Woman* (1925) (a British response to the American *Good Housekeeping* magazine) even had their own 'shopping service', offering a mail order service for those unable to 'get up to town.' Others, such as Odhams's new colour weekly *Woman* (1937), provided a consumer guarantee. Two-dimensional paper emporiums, these magazines were designed to work on different levels: on the one hand dispensing rational advice and on the other, stimulating dreams. Pages of enticing advertisements, some in full colour, were intercut with dramatic fashion illustrations, romantic fiction and product information features in an environment calculated to arouse fantasies of consumer desire that was, at the same time, reassuringly reliable and identifiable. Depending increasingly on visual effect: a collage of photo-features, typographic display, coloured illustrations, chatty editorial, readers' letters, coupons, special offers and small ads for hairpins, fabric dyes or cleaning fluids, this 'inventory of the superficial' reproduced a fragmentary experience analogous to that of modern life.[8] Furthermore, like the hugely popular middlebrow fiction of the period, these magazines represented a common, if gendered culture that made its appeal across class-defined lines, something more easily achieved through visual rather than verbal means.[9]

Magazine home craft features contributed to this mix in a number of ways, depending upon the magazine and its target audience. Aimed at a progressively minded middle-class readership of professional women, or the wives of professionals, *Modern Woman* endorsed a modern aesthetic, featuring such icons as Wells Coates' Lawn Road flats and Isokon furniture. The approach extended to home craft features that exhorted readers to hand-make rugs with abstract geometric designs; a democratization of style rooted in modernist idealism.[10] With its own Hand-craft Department in Southampton Street, the publication offered rug-making and tapestry kits complete with stencilled canvas, linen, wools and embroidery threads to make 'quality' items at a fraction of their retail price.[11] *Woman*, in contrast, addressed lower-middle-class and working-class readers and its home craft features emphasized an accessible yet respectable fashionability in addition to simplicity and 'good design'. Traditional tuppenny letterpress weeklies such as *Home Chat* and *Woman's Weekly* prioritized cleaning tips, renovation and economic transformation over consumption.

Including embroidery, rug-making, crochet, needle and appliqué work, flower arranging and some simple carpentry and woodwork, magazine home craft was concerned with creating decorative and functional objects for the home and involved skills that were traditionally perceived as feminine.[12] Largely ignored or derided by professionals, it was viewed as a leisure activity or hobby performed by amateurs which extended the idea of craft to essentially domestic skills. With his damning assessment of Women's Institute handcrafts as 'a rarefied form of household husbandry … a vision of craft void of the original political commitment, a vernacular ruralism with pretensions to decorative art,' Greenhalgh demonstrates that a hierarchy within the crafts continues to exclude and undermine amateur practice.[13] Yet, as

Cheryl Buckley has pointed out, women across class boundaries have made and designed things throughout their lives. Located in the home, for the most part, such activities remain 'on the margins' but are central, nonetheless, to the formation of feminine identities and female subjectivity.[14]

Derived, in part, from the contemporary handicrafts revival, domestic make-do-and-mend and consumer home craft demonstrated shared preoccupations with contemporary design reform, taking arts and crafts values into the new century. Whilst commercial magazines, like Hollywood films, would have been regarded sceptically as Americanizing British taste, reformist concerns to improve 'everyday things' had much in common with the models of modern living promoted in women's magazines.[15] W. R. Lethaby's belief that there was art in all 'worthy handicrafts' including cooking, bread making and 'laying the table nicely' had clear implications for the value and status of domestic work.[16] John Gloag, whose influential book *Design in Modern Life* was published in 1934, wrote interior design features for *Good Housekeeping* in the 1920s in which he encouraged the view that English traditions were compatible with modern design. Furthermore, home craft features endorsed a handicrafts ethos of integrating 'making' into everyday life. Written by named experts, with their clear instructions, diagrams, step-by-step photographs, transfers, and colourful visualizations [**1**, **2**, **3**], they were designed to be accessible; a style and approach that paralleled contemporary D.I.A. approved Dryad Handicrafts leaflets.[17]

Editors, meanwhile, were not without their own modernizing agendas. The journalist Norah Schlegel who, under the pen-name Edith Blair, wrote *Woman*'s Home Page in the later 1930s, demonstrated that journalists could play an important role liaising between manufacturers, retail buyers and consumers. She attempted to raise standards in taste and production. Committed to the principles of 'good design,' Schlegel was intent on encouraging women to be critical consumers, reforming and improving their taste by guiding them away from 'silly frippery' and towards articles that were 'plain, elegant and useful'. In addition, as her colleague Peggy Makins (the magazine's agony aunt, Evelyn Home) observed: 'forcing manufacturers to create such articles became at one time of her life a crusade': aims that would have been fully endorsed by design reformers.[18]

Handicrafts and home crafts did differ in some respects. Designed for those wishing to 'use their hands intelligently', handicrafts demanded significant levels of skill, commitment, time, energy, application and creativity from practitioners.[19] In contrast, owing to a dependence on mass-produced models and merchandizing (transfers were especially popular) [**1**], home craft should be classified as a consumer craft, a form that required minimum skill. Editors underlined its therapeutic and relaxing qualities. A *Woman* editorial enthused, 'This is the simple, effortless sort of needlework we all love doing...just the thing for the busy woman who likes to have a piece of work on hand which she can pick up at will'.[20] 'Tie-ups' in the form of named products in editorial and the occasional blatant example of product placement, such as a prominently displayed tin of Vesta paint in a *Modern Woman* DIY photo-feature, boosted advertising revenue, underlining magazines' commercial remit.[21]

The heightened visibility of the female consumer established her within a public culture of modernity.[22] In the editorial pages of magazines, and the wider popular press, the old heroes of Edwardian public life were being replaced by modern women: the sports woman, the working girl, fashion mannequins or film stars, the heroines of a modern world that prioritized feminine and domestic values. In part, a response to the post-war crisis of masculinity, this feminization of national culture coincided with female emancipation and the rapid expansion of the middle classes.[23] As much a suburban as an urban phenomenon, the modern woman was equally a housewife and mother, utilizing her home craft skills to participate in leisure activities and improve and modernize family life. Alongside images of fashionably dressed women shopping, driving motor cars and playing active sports, the housewife engaged in embroidery or DIY often appeared on the front cover of *Modern Woman* and other magazines. Dressed in striking yellow overalls and performing 'economy renovations' she embodied *New Housekeeping*'s ideal of the 'professional housewife' [**2**]. In more leisured mode, relaxed but pretty, she was creative, stitching a simple linear flower design on her 'Wildflower Teacosy', a gift from her magazine [**3**]. In both cases the housewife's smile signalled her confidence and the pleasurable nature of her task.

The note of nostalgic reverie evident in the 'Wildflower Teacosy' associates the housewife with the


45 THE LADY'S COMPANION

Haven't you been excited, little wives, about these exquisite transfers? And you must have been having a happy time making your homes lovely with anemones! This is the third and last week of our splendid FREE GIFT scheme

YOUR BEDROOM—

Let it Be Beautiful With

Our Gift Transfers

HAND-PAINTED furniture! It looks so attractive in those exclusive shops, that you can't help going in to ask the price. But that is as far as it goes, as a rule. Our purses will not stretch far in that direction, for if we do manage to save anything, we have to spend it on saucepans or something quite uninteresting!

But here comes the opportunity of getting your painted furniture free, or at most at the cost of a pot of furniture enamel. With this number we are giving you the last set of three transfers—last week we gave away three, and the week before a set of six—in our splendid gift scheme. These are exquisite flower medallions, which you can place with next to no trouble on any furniture you choose. You can use them on the furniture just as it is, or you can paint the wood first with good furniture enamel, and apply the medallion as the perfect finishing touch.

EACH medallion has the effect of a wonderful little flower painting in oil

You can see from the bedroom we have had pictured for you here, how very effective the beautiful anemone transfers are. We have given you some good suggestions, but you will probably be able to think of heaps of other ideas when you actually start to use the transfers.

colour, showing anemones in their natural colourings, with a hint of feathery green leaf

Or, if your furniture is of some beautifully grained wood, which you don't wish to decorate,

You are sure to want more of the transfers given this week, Little wives. And we have made very special arrangements so that you can obtain them at the bargain price of 2d. a strip, post free, of three medallions from the Pattern Shop, LADY'S COMPANION, 12, Southampton St., Strand, W.C.2.

If you failed by some mischance to get your copy of LADY'S COMPANION last week or the week before, send now to the Back Number Department, Messrs. George Newnes, Ltd., 8-11, Southampton St., Strand, W.C.2. You can obtain copies for 3½d. each, post free.

Supplement to "Lady's Companion" 4th. May, 1929.

Fig 1. Transfers, *The Lady's Companion*, 04/05/1929

cosy myth of Englishness, recalling Greenhalgh's accusation of 'regressive' imagery.[24] Yet, in the context of domestic consumer magazines aimed at a newly enfranchised female readership, these representations of the housewife suggest a very different reading. Commercial magazines, I propose, recast home craft as a modern activity and the housewife as an agent of modernity. This nevertheless involved complex processes of negotiation. Traditional feminine ideals had to be accommodated with representations of the modern woman, or home craft as a repository of female skills adapted to a modern culture of consumption. A form of consumer craft, magazine home craft was shaped by a cluster of competing and sometimes contradictory interests. At any one time these could include the economic agenda of the 'magazine as business'; readers' interests in fashion, creativity or economy; handicrafts ethics; reformist concerns with simplicity in design; the emergence of a modern interior aesthetic or the rationalist logic of domestic science. Arguing that home craft contributed to a distinctly feminine modernity, the rest of this article will explore how this was achieved through three distinct yet overlapping discourses emerging in

Fig 2. 'A new face for your home', *Modern Woman*, Mar. 1932

Fig 3. 'Wildflower Tea Cosy', *Modern Woman*, Oct. 1935

magazines. First, it will be considered as an aspect of interior decoration as a feminine aesthetic, then as hand crafts and a component of the new science of housekeeping, and lastly as DIY, make-do-and mend and 'home-working', an aspect of craft that addressed desires for autonomy, status, expression and economy.

'Old-World Grace and Crisp Modernity': a feminine interior aesthetic

'There are signs of rebellion against rooms where all is sacrificed to squareness and a simplicity so "modern" that it looks stark and feels exceedingly uncomfortable … The pretty room, especially if it is a bedroom, is in high fashion. This does not mean an orgy of ruffles and profuse ornament. It *does* mean drapery, fresh clear colours, touches of hand embroidery. It heralds the revival of a charm in furnishing which is best described as fragrant. Old-world grace and crisp modernity can nod happily to one another within the same four walls.

'A woman's room should be feminine. She can have streamlines and stripped oak elsewhere. Into her bedroom she can put a little of her personality and a great deal of her own handiwork'.[25]

Anthony Bertram, the influential exponent of modernism in Britain argued, somewhat condescendingly, that complaints that modern rooms were 'inhuman' and lacked 'comfort and personality' could only be countered by re-educating the masses.[26] Taking such concerns seriously, Home Editors, in contrast, strove to accommodate the modern tendency towards simplification with desires for comfort and individualism. United in a feminine interior aesthetic expressed through colour, style and decoration, these qualities were articulated for the most part through handiwork or home crafts rather than design and machine production.

This section will explore how magazines positioned home craft, decorating and 'making' within a feminine interior aesthetic. A 1937 feature in *Woman* titled 'Feminine Room'[27] went so far as to describe the new feminine aesthetic as a 'rebellion'. Home

craft, I argue, contributed to a feminine modernity that bound the modern to the domestic and reassuringly familiar. In what Bertram termed an 'unsettled age',[28] it responded both to desires for change, progress and improvement and to the need for stability, continuity and certainty. Two strategies prevailed: rethinking the modern in terms of the feminine; and establishing a time continuum that embraced the new without sacrificing the old. Both contributed to the shaping of artefacts and interiors that were implicitly English and desirably authentic. Allaying the disruptive experience of modernity in rooms, for instance, that looked 'stark' and felt 'uncomfortable', the 'feminine room' offered resolution, enabling, as the editorial enthused, 'old-world grace and crisp modernity' to 'nod happily to one another within the same four walls.'

With its assertive pinks and decorative florals the 'Feminine Room' was determinedly, if subconsciously, womb-like [4]. As this was a rebellion that favoured the feminine and symbolic over masculine, functional aspects of design, readers were advised to create a 'feeling' of sensuality with bargain transfers of stylized appliqué floral decorations worked in shades of pink, yellow and green. Spreading over curtains and upholstery, bedspreads and mats—a stencilled wisteria even hung from the ceiling—the floral motif and cosy glow associated the room with the romantic dream of a country cottage for weekend escape,[29] a potent dream of rural bliss and Englishness. Whereas the weekend retreat was well beyond the reach of the majority of the magazine's readership the fantasy, at least, was attainable materialized in embroidered mats and a carefully managed aesthetic effect.[30]

It was a fantasy, however, that depended upon innovations in print technology and an artistic touch. While photography provided an effective means of communicating procedural information in home craft features, the seductive charm of the feminine room was conveyed through colour, and that meant illustrations. Technologies enabling the mass production of large-format double-page colour spreads allowed

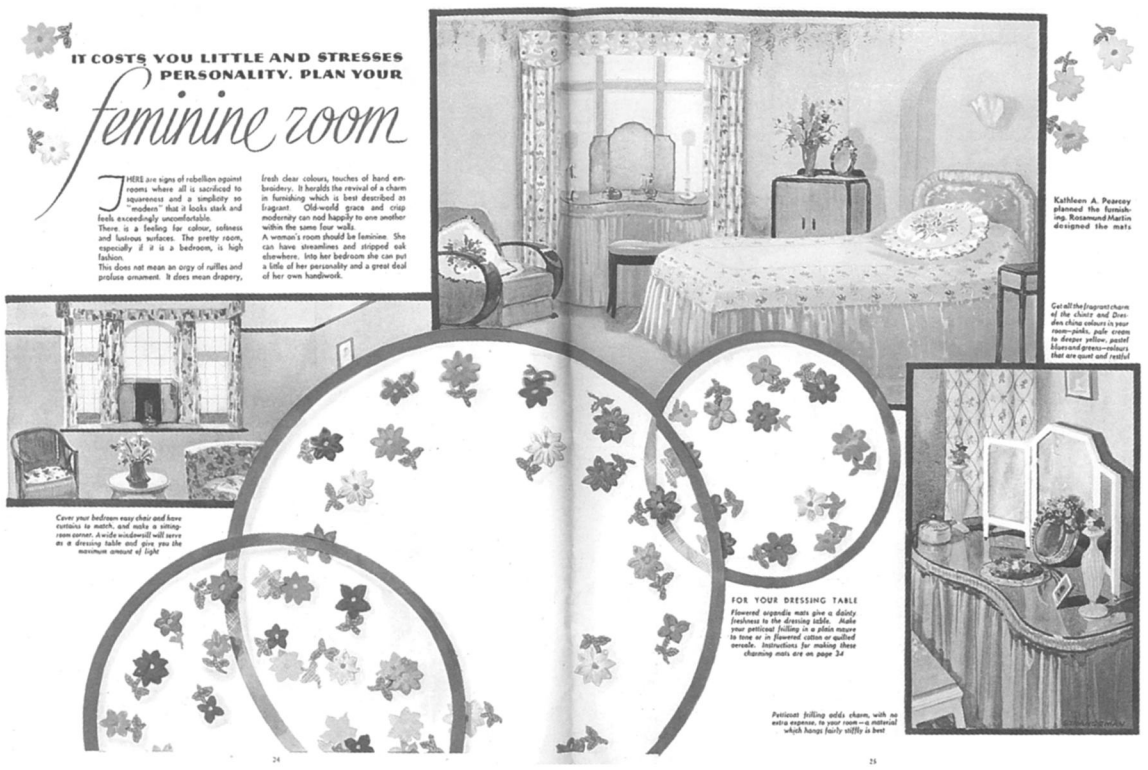

Fig 4. 'Feminine Room', *Woman* 21/08/1937

editors to heighten dramatic appeal and stimulate the housewife's desire with striking artists' visualizations.[31] A fantasy of transformation, this was principally a fantasy of the visual imagination, but one that readers were assured could be successfully materialized through their own handiwork, with a little help from their friendly Home Editor.

Significantly, the feminine room was a bedroom; feminine interior aesthetic was most evident in bedrooms, although not exclusively so. As such, the nineteenth century idea of gendered spaces persisted into the twentieth century, reinforced through the imaginative space of the magazine.[32] An ideal site for the expression of 'personality', the bedroom was a space in which feminine values in taste and aesthetics could be reclaimed and celebrated. This, nevertheless, occurred within parameters of design and taste that were implicitly sexual as well as aesthetic. Readers were primly reminded that there was to be no 'orgy of ruffles and profuse ornament'.[33]

'Making', with its allied feminine values, furthermore, was considered an appropriate means of modifying the 'masculine' tendencies of the modern interior in favour of social display. A home craft feature in *Woman* assured that 'although men don't like fripperies and modern rooms scorn odd bits and pieces, both will accept joyfully this distinguished chair back in crisp crochet'.[34] Not just an antimacassar, this example of hand work symbolized women's skills, tastes and values, smuggling these back into the modern interior under the guise of 'distinguished' design.

Editors attempted to revive feminine crafts such as crochet or embroidery by modernizing and adapting them to contemporary expectations. *Woman's* Home Editor worked hard to make crochet appeal to younger readers by underscoring its fashionability and announcing a competition and sweepstake. The article enthusiastically declared: 'we predict that it will become the rage! The older generation will delight to see the moderns taking up a pastime which was so popular in their young days'.[35] An approach that linked past, present and future, it harnessed traditional skills to new practices of consumption. Whereas, as Jeffrey Meikle has observed, efforts to establish a sense of historical continuum in the decorative arts served to 'naturalize' modernity and neutralize its strangeness, here the excitement of the new provides a means of revitalizing the old.[36] The modish banter, moreover, only partially obscures an implicit economic agenda that would have been apparent to aspirational lower-middle and working-class women and to cash-strapped middle-class readers.[37] As a *Woman's Weekly* cover demonstrates, crochet skills enabled readers to acquire luxury items such as a lace tablecloth [5] something that, otherwise, would have been unrealistically expensive for many.[38]

Associated with the nineteenth century 'cult of domesticity', the embroidery sampler was similarly revived and reinterpreted. In a tone of nostalgic reverie *Woman* encouraged its readers to work a simplified form of the traditional Friendship Sampler [6], on 4 March 1939. 'Embroidery', as Rozsika Parker observes in the *Subversive Stitch*, offers 'a repository of traditional values in an uncertain world'.[39] One can imagine that at a time of international uncertainty, eleven days before the fall of Czechoslovakia and the eclipse of Appeasement, the Friendship Sampler, with

Fig 5. 'A knitted lace for your tablecloth', *Woman's Weekly*, 16/3/1929

Fig 6. 'Friendship Sampler', *Woman* 04/03/1939

its evocation of traditional feminine values of consistency, certainty and an unchanging ideal of home, would have held particular resonance for readers.

Concerned to modernize the home, *Modern Woman* also represented it as a uniquely feminine space, but one that prioritized health in line with the magazine's commitment to rational housekeeping. In an article exploring the 'healthful influence' of colour, Pamela Firth connected the home with its female occupant, urging women to build interior schemes around their own colouring and clothes.[40] Constructing a typology based upon female physiognomy, this approach extended the system of 'personal decorating,' in which colour was an 'emotional' sign, to one in which it functioned scientifically.[41] Simultaneously a stage on which to display her personality and a means of health promotion, the home became a prosthetic extension of the housewife's body. Symbiotic components of a modern lifestyle, home and body were equally governed by demands for health and cleanliness, together producing the ease of mind that came with simplified modern living. As Yolande le Cler declared in a contemporary article on 'Modern Paris', 'we want dresses which look right in modern rooms'.[42]

Magazine home craft mediated the modern through a feminine interior aesthetic that prioritized comfort, creativity and cleanliness, combining new ideals of

progressive living with desires for intimacy, stability and permanence. As such it contributed to the prevailing culture of compromise, a mood of 'conservative modernity' that, in Alison Light's words, accommodated 'the past in new forms of the present'.[43] Nevertheless, whereas Light read this as a mood that could be 'conservative in effect and yet was often modern in form,' I would argue that for the increasing numbers of women who read commercial magazines the effects of these new ideals could be far from conservative. Evidencing the dual forces of creativity and constraint endemic to practices of domestic consumption—a feminine aesthetic that was restricted to the bedroom, for instance—home craft, nevertheless, articulated a mentality of modernity that was as much concerned with aspirations as with pragmatic needs, as much with women's pleasures as with their responsibilities.

Handcrafts, Housewifery, Health and Happiness

A modernist preoccupation, the modern home as a site of physical welfare, efficiency, hygiene and health was also a central ideal for educationalists, social reformers and domestic scientists.[44] As Home Editors continually reminded their readers, housework was a difficult and demanding job. It was one, furthermore, that increasing numbers were required to perform as more middle class women undertook their own housework and home ownership grew amongst the lower-middle class and better-paid sections of the working class, the very readership domestic weeklies wished to attract.[45] The management regimes and labour-saving appliances associated with domestic science and the new housewifery included a commitment to hand crafts (an extension of handicrafts). A component of house craft, hand crafts were an essential form of expression that simultaneously maintained ethical standards and a sense of moral worth.[46] This section will explore how handcraft was embedded in the house craft of the new housewifery, and the meanings and values attached to it.

The idea that 'domestic', 'feminine' crafts contributed to a culture of homemaking that safeguarded moral standards in private and, by implication, public life was not new. Now, however, this was to be achieved principally by raising standards of health, including psychological well-being. An arch-modernizer, like her businessman husband, *Modern Woman's* ideal housewife improved efficiency by introducing new technologies and work practices into the domestic sphere.[47] Paradoxically, she was also the guardian of the home as a private space, a buffer (psychological and otherwise) against the dislocations of progress. Perhaps surprisingly, given the publication's rationalizing, modernizing ethos, the 'real home' was, in the words of its editorial, 'a shrine of the most sacred things of life, love, birth, death, struggle, self-conquest'.[48] Just as scientific management rendered the modern home the equivalent of the public workplace, concerns emerged about its sanctity and even the sanity of the housewife. Analogies were drawn between the experience of work in the home, office and factory. Each was represented as equally fragmented, impersonal and isolating and magazines highlighted the needs of nerve-wracked housewives and female office workers for relaxation and sensible, healthy leisure pursuits.

A potential victim of suburban neurosis, the housewife was in danger of becoming obsessed with 'keeping house' while the business girl sacrificed all to become 'Efficient with a capital E'. 'Nerve force' was represented as a form of energy that had to be conserved, and conservation was an 'art'.[49] The therapeutic qualities attributed to hand crafts meant that they provided an ideal means of staving off the nervous strain of modern living. Writing in *Modern Woman* in 1935 Professor Winifred Cullis observed, 'What is needed is an outflow for nervous energy into other paths, and it probably is a self-protective instinct that makes a woman pick up her sewing or knitting while sitting still'.[50]

Drawing, perhaps unconsciously, on Arts and Crafts ideology, Cullis celebrated the pleasure to be had when producing 'beautiful', 'original' or 'quality' work. In addition to the satisfaction of simply 'having accomplished something', such qualities were to be valued in a world where creative instincts were increasingly threatened by the 'mechanical' nature of work. In the interests of sanity as much as morality, the modern home was to remain a private space, subtly differentiated from the outside world. A form of therapy for the housewife, house craft, and by extension magazine home craft, also secured the home as a space of rest and relaxation for the family. The 'feminine touch' and the personalized quality of the

handmade item contributed to the 'saving value' of the home; a humanizing and civilizing element that protected against the encroaching demands and pace of modern life.

For domestic scientists, house craft was a science but also an art. It provided the pleasurable side of housework, compensating for the responsibilities of management and the long, often isolated hours of unpaid work. While *Woman's* Housekeeping Expert Susan Strong used scientific and managerial metaphors, such as 'working a house to schedule', in her regular 1930s feature a 'Housewife's Diary', she also emphasized its artistry. Along with the *work* of housework she wrote about the creativity involved in making final touches to a bedroom, replacing flowers or rearranging articles 'where fancy wills'. Properly managed housework became fulfilling and expressive; turning out the bedroom was a 'joyous job' and newly ironed linen gave a 'thrill'.[51] In the face of diminished home production, the result of the manufacturing industry's production of goods, domestic scientists and Home Editors argued for the home as a site of creativity and individualism in which women could exercise their taste and skills.[52] As such, and despite the many advertisements for mass produced sauces, pickles and jams, *Woman's* cookery expert encouraged housewives to make their own condiments and conserves. Undertaken in the interests of economy, her skills established a woman's 'reputation' as a housekeeper.[53] Both a science and an art, the implicit contradictions in housewifery could, at times, be difficult to sustain. The Home Economist Ruth Whittaker, for instance, advocated housework time and motion studies while simultaneously acknowledging the impossibility of its standardization as 'a craft and an art'.[54] In doing so she demonstrated the extent to which even the proponents of scientific management held a romantic commitment to the home as a feminized domestic space.

Beyond their expressive potential, handcrafts were also considered to be character building, an important corrective to the excesses of modern life and a check on the pernicious influence of the new consumerism on women. Fostering qualities of self-reliance, resourcefulness, initiative and adaptability they strengthened individual and national character.[55] In words evoking the rhetoric of national identity, Whittaker claimed that domestic science produced 'well-poised, gracious women, a craftswoman, a teacher, with initiative and power of taking responsibility and ideals of lovely, simple and healthy living'.[56] As 'good' housewives applying their craft women were also performing a national role as 'good' citizens. Part of wider socialization processes, hand crafts, at the same time, defined 'good' behaviour for girls. Miss Helena Powell, the Principal of St Mary's College Paddington, saw them as an ideal way of controlling the nascent sexuality of the adolescent girl.[57] She considered 'hand-work' an ideal outlet for the 'excitement' arising at this stage of life, providing opportunities for 'self-expression of the healthy kind' as opposed to those which were 'only an intensification of self-assertion'. In much the same vein as Cullis's 'outflow of nervous energy', she concluded with the, perhaps unreliable, advice that making a jumper could ward off a nervous breakdown. Suitably submissive and with her nerves intact, the female knitter was free to fulfil her creative instincts in an approved manner.

Both a means of containing or controlling social behaviour and a source of 'healthy' self-expression, handcraft represented a necessary corrective to the excesses of modern life. Penny Sparke has observed that house craft contained within it the potential to rehabilitate what had traditionally been seen as women's work rendering it 'the equivalent of men's labour'.[58] Such views were evident in women's magazines where handcraft (and by extension home craft) as a component of house craft, represented important qualities and values for the individual, the family and the nation.

'I Did It Myself!' Agency and Adaptation

With their surfeit of inventive ideas for making, adapting and transforming objects for the home, the editors of interior, home craft and domestic features aimed to foster a sense of agency and self-determination in their readers. The diverse range of styles meant that women could not avoid developing their own judgement and taste. The emphasis on creativity and forms of consumption that were not solely dependent upon purchasing ready-made items encouraged imaginative interpretation in the interests of expression, style, quality and economy. Acknowledging their decision-making power within the domestic sphere, women were also encouraged actively to

transform their homes through home craft or interior decoration. This section will consider how magazines located these practices within the social, economic and cultural contexts of women's everyday lives.[59] In doing so it will underscore the differing ways in which DIY, make-do-and-mend and associated practices of making and adaptation were significant for increasing numbers of women.

Economy was the watchword for the cash-strapped middle-class readers of *Modern Woman* in the 1930s. 'Be your own Decorator and save money', a feature by Anne Verity, gave detailed advice on papering, distempering and floor staining to the 'home-loving' woman. Verity declared 'Few intelligent women will hesitate if, for financial reasons, they have to choose between living in shabby surroundings and tackling a spell of hard but satisfactory work'.[60]

She made decorating seem not only possible but also pleasurable by using the language and appeals of scientific management. Daunting jobs such as papering could be achieved with good preparation and method so that wallpaper 'all but hangs itself'. While an analogy with the 'art' of dressmaking feminized and aestheticized the tricky work of trimming round mantelpieces.[61] An advertisement for Hall's Distemper went further, declaring that it was '*she*' (the housewife) rather than her pipe-smoking husband—his easy arrogance expressed in his 'four-square' pose—who made the really important decisions.[62] Addressing the capable woman of the house and gently poking fun at male pomposity, the humorous tone of the advertisement reinforces the knowing pact between advertiser and housewife that, despite male illusions, she is the real power in the home. 'Warm Colours', a short story by Josephine Bentham, even represented home decorating as a scenario for romance.[63]

A radical policy change at *Woman* in the late 1930s, as publishers and editors struggled to increase circulations and attract advertising, was reflected in a new editorial approach to home craft. The original Home Editor Kathleen Pearcey (her full title was 'Expert in the Art of Living') had addressed a middle-class audience with suggestions for stripping and modernizing furniture 'inherited' from the 'old home'. By 1939 'The Edith Blair Home Service' made no such assumptions, its economical tips for cleaning and DIY style transformations accommodating the needs of wider readerships.[64] Including making one's own furniture, a possibility owing to the greater simplicity of modern design, the important thing was that it *looked* modern and conformed to an aesthetic of simplicity and practicality but without the extremes of rationalism. A stairway became a 'modern looking fitting' by encasing the banister rails in sheets of stained or painted plywood. With a little judicious sawing and reassembling, an old glass-fronted bookcase became a cunning space-saver.[65] Each feature finished with 'Let's Print Your Hint' (which was sometimes called Domestiquestions) and readers' suggestions for cheap or novel adaptations. Endorsing a self-consciously active, critical and imaginative approach, the 'Home Service' worked to integrate 'making' into readers' everyday lives. Whether or not these ideas worked in reality, much of their appeal lay in the fantasy of transformation they promised; an appeal that, as the seemingly unending television programmes about home transformation remind us, remains potent today.

Pleasures, not only of making, but also of achieving an enviable social display, were central to DIY and home craft features. 'I did it myself!' gave instructions on how to transform a cheap white wood tea wagon into a desirable object that would astound one's 'well furnished friends' by sanding, sizing, painting and lacquering it to a 'fashionable shade of French grey'.[66] Attention to detail was especially important in communicating social standing. Another feature on tea wagons (an important item in the modern servantless home), this time about customized mats, assured readers that a 'tailored' and 'well dressed' tea wagon was 'one of those final touches that makes such a difference'.[67] The value and pleasures of making and transformation were continually underlined. Blair enthused, 'Isn't it a glorious feeling when you've made some ordinary possession look magnificent?'.[68] Her message was implicitly democratizing. Irrespective of their economic circumstances, Blair told her readers that they could play an active part in modernizing their homes and, by implication, themselves. All they needed was energy, ingenuity, a little know-how and, of course, their magazines.

A pleasurable activity, home craft also represented a form of home-working and a valuable revenue source for some, particularly during the economically troubled years of the later 1920s and early 1930s. *Home Chat* confidently proclaimed, 'There's Money in Making Kiddy-Clothes'.[69] Large numbers were attempting to turn amateur skills into a viable business.

According to its agony aunt, Leonora Eyles, 'Hundreds of girls' wrote to *Modern Woman* seeking advice on how to commercialize 'handwork' skills. Eyles advocated home crafts as a means of income generation, encouraging women to explore the market in 'hand-made', 'distinctive' things for those who disliked the mass produced but could not afford 'West-End prices'.[70] Paradoxically, while magazines worked to preserve the ideals of amateur work and leisure, considered essential in the maintenance of respectable femininity, the underlying emphasis on income suggests the degree to which this was a myth, masking the true significance of women's earnings within the home. While advertisements for The Association of Homecraft Studios (a mail order firm that also ran correspondence courses) in *Modern Woman*, promoted an image of 'pleasant' and 'artistic' labour, suitable for women and 'so fascinating that it could scarcely be called work at all', the promise of 'Big Cash Profits' was clearly an important incentive [7]. Unlike Moira Vincentelli, I do not view such advertisements as patronizing women.[71] Their evocation of the fashionability of arty-craftiness (a significant desire in itself) was also indicative of the widespread, if unspoken, need to make money at home, even among the middle classes. As such, home craft indicated a covert return to craft as a form of paid employment, enabling women to remain at home *and* contribute to the

Fig 7. 'An artistic way to make money at home', *Modern Woman*, Feb. 1929

family budget. In more extreme cases it may have served as a source of income for those unqualified for any other form of work.[72]

Women's memories of creating homemade things confirmed Home Editors' emphasis on pleasure in making. As Eileen Hunt, the daughter of a civil servant recalled, women did it because 'they loved doing it', adding 'there was no"have to" about it'.[73] Madge Taylor, a regular reader of *Woman's Weekly* and, in her autobiography, Dorothy Scannell suggested other ways in which making could be meaningful. Madge, who did not marry but worked as a civil servant in London and lived with her widowed mother in Kent, did a lot of knitting. The majority of things were gifts for friends or relatives and she recalled that, for her, this was (and remains) the chief significance and pleasure of knitting.[74] Her skills, furthermore, tied her into the threads of family life, allowing Madge to fulfil her daughterly duty (strongly felt owing to her father's early death), while contributing to a modest yet clearly expressed sense of pride and self-esteem. Later, as an aunt, they enabled her to cement relationships with nephews and nieces and establish her place within her extended family. Demonstrating the social and communal aspects of home craft, Madge also suggested the potential emotional benefits involved when she described knitting a tennis sweater, a gift for a boy she liked who travelled to work on the same train. In similar vein, Dorothy Scannell recounted making a pullover for 'an elegant young man' whom she had admired from afar at her local tennis club. Unsuccessful, in part owing to her lack of knitting skills, her efforts resulted in public humiliation as the boy displayed her shapeless offering to the amusement of his assembled friends. The jumper, nonetheless, served as a means of materializing desires that may otherwise have been difficult to express. While I found no evidence that knitting prevented a nervous breakdown, this painful episode signals its involvement, and that of other hand-made things, in wider social and emotional processes such as managing and dealing with unrequited love.

Conclusion: 'The Hand-made Home'

Jean Bennett, writing in *Woman* in the later 1930s, gave a robust defence of the continued value of hand crafts, declaring 'there is still a thrill in making something for yourself, even in this machine age'.[75] Titled 'The Hand-made Home', her article demonstrates the possibilities, but also some of the shortcomings, of attempts to reconcile past and present or, more precisely, modern living with the myth of merry England. A bungalow boasting cement-covered flower bowls, electric light pendants made from rough hewn elm and a refectory bench, Bennett assured, would not have looked out of place in an 'early Briton's home'. In matters of taste, the hand-made home was undoubtedly questionable. It, nevertheless, encapsulates many of the issues surrounding home crafts in the period. Invoking values of truth to materials, traditionally associated with the crafts, simplicity in design and natural harmony, and combining these with the benefits of new technology, the hand-made home exemplifies conservative modernity. Accommodating the past in new forms of the present it also negotiates the functional with the symbolic.

Along with the 'Fandango Lady' (an appliquéd table-mat), the 'well-tailored tea wagon', the 'Lasso Lamp' and many other creations of magazine home craft, the 'hand-made home' epitomized what Judy Attfield terms design in the lower case, the 'wild things': '"trifles", fancy goods, the kitsch, the fetish, the domestic, the decorative and the feminine, the bric-a-brac that exudes unashamed materiality'.[76] While it incorporated elements of the visual style associated with the modern period, magazine home craft emerged from a set of discourses and practices: hand craft, house craft and handicrafts, that embraced established feminine skills and values. Expressed differently in different magazines, it was an approach calculated to appeal to women and, by the end of the 1930s new weeklies such as *Woman* were mediating this message to a mass audience through transformation tips and make-do-and-mend.

More recently, commercial consumer crafts have been criticized for standardizing, 'de-skilling' and diminishing craft, removing it from its functional roots and causing women to become dependent upon projects and kits rather than exploring their own 'ideas, values, experiences and fantasies'.[77] Far from devaluing craft, this article argues that, in the inter-war years at least, magazine home craft contributed to its democratization, encouraging women to express their ideas, values, experiences and fantasies in unique ways. Furthermore, it offered them a potential source of income, albeit in covert form.

The modernizing remit of editors such as Schlegel meant that magazines helped disseminate new ideas about making and modern living in ways that went some way towards bridging, if not healing, the gap between design professionals and popular taste. For women with limited time and money, but the aspiration to create an improved modern home, magazines with their home craft features provided a service that was not readily available elsewhere. Mediating a set of tastes, values and desires that put feminine concerns at the centre of modern life, the prevalence of home craft in commercial magazines suggests that addressing women's pragmatic needs and aspirations was as important as educating and improving their taste.

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Notes

1 R. Whittaker, *Modern Developments in Domestic Science Training*, J. M. Dent, 1930, p. 3.

2 This article is based on research for my Ph.D. thesis 'They Opened up a Whole New World: Modernity, Femininity and Domesticity in Women's Magazines, 1919–1939' and on a paper given at the study day accompanying 'Stitch! The art and craft of homemaking,' Museum of Domestic Design & Architecture, Middlesex University, April 2003.

3 See Jen Browne 'Decisions in DIY: Women, Home Improvements and Advertising in Post-war Britain' in M. Andrews & M. Talbot (eds.), *All the World and Her Husband, Women in Twentieth-Century Consumer Culture*, Cassell, 2000, pp. 131–45.

4 A. Light, *Forever England: Femininity, Literature and Conservatism Between the Wars*, Routledge, 1991, p. 10. Also see M. Berman, *All That is Solid Melts Into Air: The Experience of Modernity*, Verso, 1983 & M. Nava and A. O'Shea (eds.) *Modern Times: Reflections on a Century of English Modernity*, Routledge, 1996.

5 P. Greenhalgh 'The English Compromise: Modern Design and National Consciousness 1870–1940' in W. Kaplan (ed.) *Designing Modernity: The Arts of Reform and Persuasion 1885–1945*, Thames and Hudson, 1995, p. 136. Also see J. Meikle 'Domesticating Modernity: Ambivalence and Appropriation, 1920–40' pp. 143–67 in the same volume. Domesticity as a modern phenomenon has been explored by C. Reed (ed.) *Not at Home: The Suppression of Domesticity in Modern Art and Architecture*, Thames & Hudson, 1986.

6 For readings of feminine modernity see S. Alexander *Becoming a Woman and Other Essays in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Feminist History*, Virago, 1994; Mica Nava 'Modernity's Disavowal: Women, the City and the Department Store' in M. Nava and A. O'Shea, op. cit. pp. 38–76; J. Winship 'New Disciplines for Women and the Rise of the Chain Store in the 1930s' in Andrews & Talbot op. cit. pp. 23–45; D. Ryan 'The *Daily Mail* Ideal Home Exhibition and Suburban Modernity, 1908–51' Unpublished Ph.D., University of East London, June 1995; J. Giles, *The Parlour and the Suburb: Domestic Identities, Class, Femininity and Modernity*, Berg, 2004.

7 C. White, *Women's Magazines 1693–1968*, Michael Joseph, 1970. See my discussion of magazine dress patterns 'Making Modern Women, Stitch by Stitch: Dressmaking and Women's Magazines in Britain 1919–39' in B. Burman (ed.) *The Culture of Sewing: Gender, Consumption and Home Dressmaking*, Berg, 1999, pp. 73–97.

8 M. Berman, op. cit. Also see S. Stein 'The Graphic Ordering of Desire: Modernization of a Middle-Class Women's Magazine, 1919–1939' in R. Bolton (ed.) *The Contest of Meaning*, MIT, 1999, pp. 145–163.

9 For a discussion of middlebrow fiction see R. McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures, England 1918–1951*, Oxford University Press, 1998.

10. *Modern Woman*, January, 1927, p. 30 & January 1935, p. 23. Modernist architecture and furniture, such as Wells Coates' Lawn Road Flats, Hampstead and Isokon furniture appeared in *Modern Woman* editorials during the 1930s.

11 For example *Modern Woman* October 1935 p. x.

12 A. Callen *Angel in the Studio: Women in the Arts & Crafts Movement*, London, Astragal Books, 1979; P. Kirkham (ed.) *The Gendered Object*, Manchester University Press, 1996; B. Elliott & J. Helland (eds.) *Women Artists and the Decorative Arts 1880–1935: The Gender of Ornament*, Ashgate, 2002.

13 P. Greenhalgh 'The History of Craft' in P. Dormer (ed.) *The Culture of Craft, Status and Future*, Manchester University Press, 1997, p. 37. Such assumptions have been redressed more recently: the exhibition 'Stitch' at MODA and J. Turney, 'Here's One I Made Earlier: Making and Living with Home Craft in Contemporary Britain', *Journal of Design History*, vol. 17 no. 3, pp. 267–81.

14 C. Buckley 'On the Margins: Theorizing the History and Significance of Making and Designing Clothes at Home' in B. Burman (ed.) *The Culture of Sewing: Gender, Consumption and Home Dressmaking*, Berg, 1999, pp. 55–72.

15 For Reformist dislike of American products and culture see J. Holder, 'Design in Everyday Things: Promoting Modernism in Britain 1912–1944' in P. Greenhalgh (ed.) *Modernism in Design*, Reaktion Books, 1990, pp. 123–43.

16 W. R. Lethaby, *Home and Country Arts*, London, Home and Country, 1923.

17 For instance, A. L. Chadwick, *Embroidered Flowers*, Dryad Leaflet No. 78, Dryad Handicrafts, Leicester.

18 P. Makins, *The Evelyn Home Story*, Collins, 1975, p. 175.

19 P. Kirkham, 'Women and the Inter-war Handicrafts Revival' in J. Attfield and P. Kirkham (eds.) *A View From the Interior: Women and Design*, The Women's Press, first published 1989, 2nd edition, 1995, pp. 174–83. See De Foubert, *The Girl's Book of Hobbies*, Blackie & Sons, 1925 for the wide range of hobbies and the high levels of skills involved in handicrafts.

20 *Woman* 26.06.1937, p. 34.

21 *Modern Woman* November 1925, p. 25. Early issues of the magazine included the free gift of a set of Old Bleach linen tablemats stamped for embroidery. Old Bleach placed full page advertisements in the magazine, for instance: *Modern Woman* October 1925, p. 8.

22 Nava op. cit.; G. Reekie, *Temptations: Sex, Selling and the Department Store*, Allen & Unwin, 1993; R. Bowlby, *Carried Away, the Invention of Modern Shopping*, Faber & Faber, 2000; E. Rappaport, *Shopping for Pleasure, Women in the Making of London's West End*, Princeton University Press, 2000.

23 Light op. cit. For the expansion of the middle classes see McKibbin op. cit.

24 Greenhalgh op. cit., 1995.

25 *Woman* 21.08.1937, p. 24.

26 A. Bertram, *Design*, Pelican, 1938, p. 72.

27 *Woman* 21.08.1937, p. 24.

28 Bertram described the unitized furniture in a bachelor flat as 'Flexible design for an unsettled age'. Bertram op. cit. Figure 52.

29 C. Hussey, 'The Week-end House', *Guide des objects exposes dans le pavillon du Royaume Uni: Exposition Internationale Paris*, HMSO, 1937. S. Tallents, *The Projection of England*, Faber, 1932.

30 In an article on floral table ornaments, Eve Knight wrote: 'The most entrancing floral decoration of all is the one which no money can buy – a bowl of honest English garden roses. The flower shops patronized by the rich, the high artists in this trade, rarely sell these incomparable flowers. The cottage alone frames their beauty on a simple breakfast or tea table, in a window or beside a bed' *Woman* 12.06.1937, p. 48.

31 D. Reed, *The Popular Magazine in Britain and the United States 1880–1960,* The British Library, 1997.

32 P. Sparke, *As Long As It's Pink: The Sexual Politics of Taste*, Harper Collins, 1995.

33 *Woman* 21.08.1937, p. 24.

34 Ibid. 28.08. 1937, p. 10.

35 Ibid. 25.02.1939, p. 12.

36 Meikle op. cit.

37 In 'Cinderella Room', an article advising on how to transform a 'dismal attic' with 'a little money and a lot of enthusiasm', Home Editor Kathleen Pearcey referred to the magazine's readership as 'the limited income class.' *Woman* 26.06.1937, p. 41.

38 *Woman's Weekly* 16.03.1929. Sue Scott has written about the popularity of crochet in G. Elinor et al. (eds.), *Women and Craft*, Virago, 1987, pp. 23–7.

39 R. Parker, *The Subversive Stitch, Embroidery and the Making of the Feminine,* The Women's Press, 1984, p. 161. Parker has demonstrated the ways in which embroidery was used to inculcate, negotiate and subvert feminine ideology.

40 *Modern Woman* 10.1925, p. 20. 'Women who were fair and "inclined to shades of pink" were advised to avoid yellow and orange in their rooms, whilst those with red hair were encouraged that shades of brown relieved by "bright touches of green and blue" would be "very becoming as a background."'

41 K. Halttunen, 'From Parlour to Living Room: Domestic Space, Interior Decoration, and the Culture of Personality' in, S. J. Bronner (ed.), *Consuming Visions: Accumulation and Display of Goods in America, 1880–1920*, W. W. Norton and Co., 1989, pp. 157–190.

42 *Modern Woman*, May, 1929, p. 18. 'We do not, any of us, intend to spend our days in struggling with servants who won't dust all our gimcracks, or clean all that mass of silver on the table. Light, air, colour, cleanliness and comfort are the things we want in our homes, and our clothes must fit in with them.' For the relationship between fashion and architecture see D. Fausch et al. (eds.) *Architecture: In Fashion*, Princeton Architectural Press, 1994.

43 Light op. cit., pp. 10–11.

44 For discussion of the New Housewifery and theories of scientific management in the home see A. Forty, *Objects of Desire: Design and Society 1750–1980*, Thames & Hudson, 1986; J. Freeman, *The Making of the Modern Kitchen: A Cultural History*, Berg, 2004; B. Ehrenreich & D. English, *For Her Own Good: 150 Years of the Experts' Advice to Women*, Pluto Press, 1979. For a critical assessment of the benefits of New Housekeeping see, R. Schwartz Cowan, *More Work for Mother: The Ironies of Household Technology from the Open Hearth to the Microwave*, Free Association Books, 1989, first published 1983; Judy Wajcman, 'Domestic Technology: Labour-saving or Enslaving?' in S. Jackson & S. Moores (eds.) *The Politics of Domestic Consumption: Critical Readings*, Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1995, pp. 217–30.

45 J. Burnett, *A Social History of Housing 1815–1985,* Methuen, 1986. J. McAleer, *Popular Reading and Publishing in Britain 1914–50*, Clarendon Press, 1992.

46 E. Lupton & J. Abbott Miller, *The Bathroom, the Kitchen and the Aesthetics of Waste: A Process of Elimination*, MIT, 1992.

47 An advertisement for floor polish, for example, accused the 'young wife' of failure to cost her time efficiently by using labour-saving products; although 'married to a City man' she 'valued her time less than his messenger's.' *Modern Woman*, February, 1935, p. 76.

48 *Modern Woman*, July, 1925, p. 7.

49 *Home Chat,* 23.11.1929, p. 497; *Modern Woman* February, 1930, p. 13. See discussion of 'The Suburban Neurosis' in J. Giles, *Women, Identity and Private Life in Britain, 1900–50*, Macmillan Press, 1995 and neurasthenia in E. Showalter, *Women, Madness and English Culture, 1830–1980*, Virago, 1987.

50 *Modern Woman*, February, 1935, p. 10.

51 *Woman* 03.07.1937, p. 42.

52 Ehrenreich & English, op. cit.; C. Hardyment, *From Mangle to Microwave: the Mechanisation of Household Work*, Polity Press, 1988.

53 *Woman* 07.01.1939, p. 27.

54 Whittaker, op. cit., p. 43 & 59.

55 Kirkham, 1989, op. cit., p. 176.

56 Whittaker, op. cit., p. 32.

57 M. Scharlieb, *Sexual Problems To-day,* Williams & Norgate, 1924, pp. 105–6.

58 Sparke, 1995, op. cit., pp. 151–2.

59 This differed according to a magazine's target audience. While *Modern Woman* taught the 'intelligent' woman, 'newly wed' or 'bachelor girl' with limited funds how to do her own decorating and economically modernize old furniture by stripping, varnishing and recovering: *Modern Woman* 03.1935: vii; 02. 1939 pp. 46–7, *Home Chat's* feature on 'The Typist's Collar' promised inexpensive fashionability: *Home Chat* 07.06.1924, p. 503.

60 *Modern Woman* 03.1935, p. vii.

61 The main item of expenditure was the expert's booklet on interior decoration: *Interior Decoration* by Wilma A. Blood cost 7d by post with a coupon from the magazine. Addresses for purchase of small items such as a step stool and bucket bracket were given in the magazine's 'We'll Tell You' feature.

62 *Modern Woman* April 1930, p. 49.

63 *Modern Woman* November, 1936, pp. 24–5.

64 *Woman* 25.09.1937, p. 17. Blair's tips included placing a bag made from newspaper at the end of the draining board to catch

potato peelings, a technique I remember my grandmother using.

65 *Woman* 18.03.1939, p. 23.

66 Ibid. 11.12.1937, p. 13.

67 Ibid. 'Tea Wagons Must Be Tailored,' 26.06.1937, p. 34.

68 *Woman* 11.12.1937, p. 13.

69 *Home Chat* 25.8.1934. It used the term 'pin money'.

70 *Modern Woman* April 1929, p. 100, December 1927, p. 100 & September 1927, p. 88.

71 M. Vincentelli, 'Potters of the 1920s' in Elinor et al., p. 75.

72 Craftwork was an acceptable form of employment for middle class women: A. A. Callen, *The Angel in The Studio: Women and the Arts and Crafts Movement*, Astragal Books, 1979. Numerous studies of working-class women's lives have demonstrated the importance of women's efforts in this respect: E. Roberts, *A Woman's Place: An Oral History of Working Class Women 1890–1940*, Blackwell, 1984; L. Davidoff, 'The Family in Britain' in E. M. L. Thompson, *The Cambridge Social History of Britain 1750–1950,* vol. 2., People and the Environment, CUP, 1990. Bringing up five boys in a working class neighbourhood in Staffordshire during the 1930s, my grandmother was endlessly knitting children's jumpers or crocheting chair backs and other items.

73 E. Hunt, interview with Zoe Hendon, September, 2002. Thanks to Zoe Hendon for kindly sharing this information.

74 Interview with Madge Taylor, 1994; D. Scannell, *Mother Knew Best: An East End Childhood*, Pan Books, 1974.

75 *Woman* 07.08.1937, p. 32.

76 J. Attfield *Wild Things, The Material Culture of Everyday Life*, Berg, 2000, p. 33.

77 P. Dalton 'Housewives, Leisure Crafts and Ideology, Deskilling in Consumer Craft' in G. Elinor et al. (eds.) *Women and* Craft, London, Virago, 1987, p. 32.